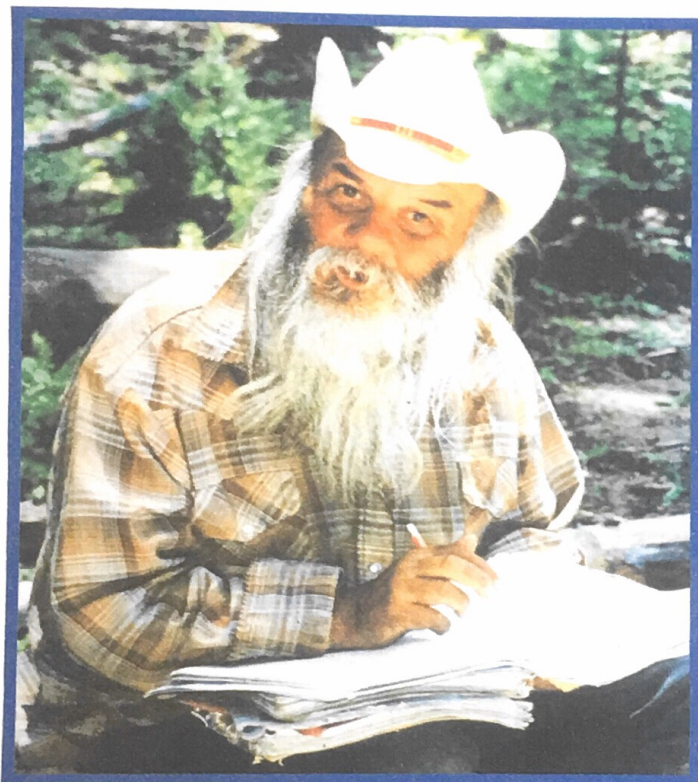




# Rainbow Family

## Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.  
Interviews with Rainbow  
Family of Living Light  
folks conducted between  
1977 and 2008.*

*Scanned in 2018.  
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14.D SARAH WINDFIRE  
- "A Child of the Rainbow"

12 pages

[14.D]



Sarah Windfire and Scotter - with comments by Coyote  
 [Sarah and Scotter are a couple who went to the Arkansas Gathering before they met each other. They met afterwards as part of the OM cooking scene in Stillwater and lived off and on in the Stillwater area for the next three years. Coyote and her husband Ananda still live in Paradise Valley between Stillwater and Gyle. The interviews were in 1978.]

### Sarah - A Child of the Rainbow

I was born in New London, Connecticut on June 24, 1951. I come from Jewish extraction on both sides. My father was from a family of ten children. His father had a restaurant, but he was a run-around. His mother kept the restaurant. My father really loved her. She was very protective of him. His family were peasants from Russia - uneducated. They were Jews but not religious. They had Christmas stockings.

My mother was very class-conscious. She is a very proper Virgo lady. She grew up in a very strict family. She always was concerned about what people thought. My dad didn't care. He hung around with Italians and he was the first Jewish boy in New London to join the YMCA.

My father was a bum. He quit school in the eighth grade. He was the black sheep of the family. The only one who had any faith in him was his mother. He spent his youth playing pool and gambling until he married my mother - much to his family's chagrin.

It was a very stormy marriage. Right after they got married, she found out he didn't stay at home and didn't keep a job. He's generous to a fault, the most loving of all his family, but he let the money slip through his fingers while my mother was raised to hold onto the shekels tightly. It wasn't until I was 18 years old, getting stoned with my older sister, that she told me my parents had divorced and remarried three times before I was born. My parents never got divorced again after she had me. My mother would quote, "I couldn't live with him and I couldn't live without him."

We lived in lots of different places. When I was born we lived in a public housing project. After I was born, my dad went through a personality change. He blacked out and had a breakdown and had



to go to the hospital.

We had a goodly amount of Jewish culture, but not much of the religion. The only time I went to temple was for weddings and bar mitzvahs. My father never had a bar mitzvah. He had an honorary bar mitzvah at the age of 45. If we lit the menorah at Hannukah, we usually lit it for three days and then forgot about it. [Instead of the usual eight days.]

My sister was skinny—my mother couldn't get her to eat, I was the exact opposite. My mother couldn't stop me from eating. No matter how thin my mother gets, she still thinks of herself as fat. I take after her. My dad and I had a very special relationship. He was my protector. I thought he was kind of glamorous because he was easy going. I suppose I'm attracted to men like my father—kind of macho. He's one of the most honest people I've ever known and one of the most generous—but he's a hustler. He was an exhibition pool player. He could get all the balls with one hand behind his back. When I was 15, he took me to a billiard parlor and commenced to show me how to play. A kid challenged him to play. It took my dad a while to warm up, but he must have hit 25 in a row. At high school that kid kept after me to get my dad to come back to the pool hall.

When I was a kid, if I entered a contest, I would write my father's name on the entry blank, and I swear to God I'd win. He's a winner.

I was a pretty insecure young lady and I spent a good amount of time trying to find something to take me out of my insecurity, whether it was boyfriends or drugs or riding around in the car. My parents were away from home a lot. My dad was on business trips and my mother used to do volunteer work for the National Jewish Hospital for Respiratory Diseases where my father spent some time when he had tuberculosis. My father didn't worry when I came in late, but my mother did. My father's attitude was, "Children raise themselves," and they used to argue a lot about our raising.

In high school I was going to marry a musician named Frank who was a drummer. He had a scholarship to Julliard. He did a lot of drugs. I was straight when I met him. He was the one who



turned me on to acid. He was a Catholic and had a lot of guilt complexes about whatever he did - drugs, sex, the whole bit.

I ran away from high school in the fall of '68 to San Francisco to stay in the Haight with Frank. I've never been one for lice and poverty and bad diet, so it didn't appeal to me. I enjoyed the freedom and tripping around with the people, but I'm not a do-nothing. I couldn't find a job. I almost got a job at the telephone company but they said I was overweight, so I couldn't be an insurance risk. So I went home.

Frank would do a whole lot of speed, a whole lot of acid, and I couldn't communicate with him. Then he'd straighten out and repent. I told everybody, "Don't give him any acid," and he stole a hit of it. I came by to see him. We were planning to go to New York State to spend the night and he was acting weird. It was an awful night. His body turned completely rigid - tensed up so he couldn't hardly move. Next morning he was the same way, making me tell him I loved him, would I help him, he needed to see somebody, he was going crazy, all kinds of demons in his head. I went to my girlfriend and we got some Thorazine from the guy Frank stole the acid from. It calmed him down. When he woke up, he was the same way - all freaked out. He asked me to take him to the emergency ward of a mental health clinic and the doctor suggested he should go to the New York mental hospital. They pumped him full of Thorazine and electricity. He has no mind at all now and very little memory. He equates music with drugs, so music now is out of the question.

I went to an art college, but I was never really college material. I quit after one semester because I got stoned all the time and did so much acid that I couldn't possibly do school work. I spent most of my time after that with two good friends - two gay guys who had a head store. They were just learning about natural foods and they were turning me on to natural foods and a good feeling about myself. They had a lot of straight friends and they introduced me to a lot of people.

Then I moved to New York with the girl I lived with.



We lived with this gay guy. He was cuckoo. He had a Shirley Temple complex. His nanny used to dress him up in Shirley Temple clothes when he was a baby. I didn't want to live in New York, so I went off to Florida with another guy. He turned out to be a bum.

I went back to Florida to my two gay friends' house in May, 1970, when the Kent State thing happened. All the colleges went on strike and I went to New York and worked a switchboard for the strike at the New School for Social Research. One day I had to go over to the New York University switchboard and when I got back, I found that everybody had gotten busted. It was all over.

I went to Provincetown, Massachusetts, and when I came back to New York, I hung out with this guy Don. We became sweeties and lived together for two years. It was a difficult relationship. He was very independent. When I moved in he had just one chair, one plate, one knife and one fork.

It turned Don onto acid for the first time and we did a lot of acid. That's where I got turned on to nature again like I had been when I went to summer camp as a kid. We did a lot of backpacking into Harriman State Park with topographical maps and we would do acid and take our clothes off and trip around.

I was very insecure. I didn't know if I could take care of myself. Every acid trip I took came down to that. I didn't know how to take care of myself. Once I went off with this girl and her boyfriend hitchhiking to Canada. Then when we got to Alberta, I had fun, but I really loved that man Don, so I called him and he sent me money to come back. I gave it a try until November, 1971, when I moved in with my best girlfriend. I got into junk for a little while.

Then in early 1972, I got the insurance money from my Volkswagen bus being stolen and went to Europe for a year hitch hiking. Europe was the beginning of my happiness. After I was there a week, I met a fun-loving, normal man for the first time in a long time. His name was Jean Paul. We had a relaxed, friendly relationship and he could



Speak three languages, so he helped me get around. We went to the Grand Canary Island and lived in a cave. Then we went back to Madrid. Jean Paul was trying to get his immigration papers to Canada to get away from the French draft. I helped him with the papers but I didn't wait for it to be finished. My sister and her old man were supposed to meet me in France. Jean Paul couldn't go there because the French government would have clipped him.

So I hitched to Bordeaux to meet my sister. I met this Brazilian guy named Rafael and went hitchhiking with him and my sister and her old man across southern France. Then Rafael went to see his sister in England and I got a motorcycle ride to Venice. I got a baby-sitting job there. Then I went to Florence. I loved all the beautiful churches statuary. I went to Rome and tripped around—it was all right, but it was just another big city as far as I was concerned. So I hitched to Brindis and got a boat to Corfu. It was beautiful, like paradise—a green island. I got a job there as a waitress. When the Sixth Fleet came in, I met these really nice young guys. They slipped me some bucks and I got drunk. I was puking up all night.

I was due to meet Jean Paul in Athens June 26. We had been in communication all this time. I hitched all across Greece—quite a trip. I wouldn't recommend it to hitch hikers. I rented a room in a pension in Athens with a good view of the Acropolis. Jean Paul arrived on a third-class Turkish boat. We had a glorious reunion, tormented around. Then we decided to go to another island to find a cave to live in. We picked out Ios—no cars, just donkeys. We picked out a cave. We went diving and caught octopus and ate it. I nearly drowned and Jean Paul rescued me.

A guy showed up with hash and opium and drums and we played music and got stoned in our cave every night. Then the heat was on. Too many people were coming to the island and they didn't want people hanging out. So we went back to Athens and hitched to Istanbul.

Greece was magnificent. It changed me. It was there I began to feel my roots and realize that the way people lived in America the way people lived in America wasn't the only way. People were so friendly in Greece.

Istanbul freaked me out. It was hard-core big city, but I was



enchanted at the view. Then all our money got stolen. We found out about Turkish hospitality. Everybody who knew we were on the outs helped us. They fed us - found us a place to stay.

Jean Paul and I got some money together and he wanted to get back to see how his immigration papers were doing. So we hitched across Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia. That trip is where I really felt my roots. We visited with gypsies in Romania there and Bulgaria were the first places I had been where the men didn't eye me or hassle me as a woman because they were used to women working with men there. In Romania this guy begged us to help smuggle him out of the country. The closer you go to Russia, the more up tight they are. It was hard hitching because there aren't many cars and they wouldn't pick us up. Jean Paul had long hair.

We went to Italy and met up with Jean Paul's mother. Then we went to Spain and stayed for about a month. His papers had come and he was ready to immigrate to Canada. I flew to New York and he flew to Montreal. I was going to immigrate to Canada, but I couldn't take the cold weather.

I was going to stay with my two gay friends, but they moved to Stephen Gaskin's Farm in Tennessee and they were really into it. I didn't go to the Farm because their letters to me were really weird. One of them left the Farm and became a part owner of the Carnival natural food cafe in Boulder. I got a job in Massachusetts. I had a lot of confidence from my trip to Europe. I did a garden and learned carpentry. I started traveling with friends and that's how I went to the Rainbow Gathering in Arkansas in 1975.

I met Jimmer and Kib in Tucson handing out invitations for the gathering. I stayed in the Joshua Tree Desert in California for about two weeks after that. Then I went to the gathering. It really got me high. Everything seemed right to me. Everything seemed to be in the natural order of things. I first opened my voice there, singing without any accompaniment. People appreciated what you wanted to perform, no matter how professional you were. I felt in Arkansas I had become enlightened and I wanted to turn on everybody - like "Hey, it's not bad to take your clothes off. It's just what your attitude is."

So I left the gathering with the caravan to Stillwater, Oklahoma.



It was a let-down to me. People started fussing with each other about what I eat they should eat and shouldn't eat. I left after two days and headed for Big Bend National Park because I had a sweetie there. I nearly got arrested for not having money but I wasn't worried, because I was a child of the Rainbow. I was still high from the gathering. Then I went to where the caravan was camped at Lake Carl Blackwell near Stillwater. I hung around with the caravan for a few days. Then I went to the Maricopa Apache Reservation in New Mexico, but they were mostly drunks, so I went to Washington State to visit Don, the guy I lived with once in New York. I hadn't seen him in years. I spent a couple of nights in the Tetons fasting and walking around. I ran out of money and I would get jobs at restaurants cleaning bathrooms and washing dishes.

Then I stopped in Boulder, Colorado, to visit my friends in the Carnival Cafe. I thought it was a wonderful place. At the time, I didn't think this - but now, I think you can get too hung up in a food trip. Like some people felt we shouldn't serve dairy products. But it was well organized. There was a lot of energy and people were doing it.

I came back to Stillwater. I couldn't get along with Oro at OM Cooking Cafe at first, or I would have been cooking there. That was a pretty hard time for me. Scotter was one of my few allies there. My relationship with him was one of the best things I had. Then he left with Pip to go get peyote. As soon as he left, I had the conscious realization of how much he meant to me. How much his way of being meant for feeling good. I hadn't appreciated him that much at first. He was just a good friend at first.

The peyote ceremony went on and Scotter didn't come back, although I could feel his presence. The day after Halloween, I took off with Jimmer. We were going to the Bahamas, but we went to Fayetteville and we were there with Bear and Peanut. We went to Ebby's place at Snowball, Arkansas. Jimmer was still grieving because he had been hanging out with Oro's daughter Tara and she had gone to Alaska. Jimmer got to drinking more and being ugly. I was bummed out. I felt like I really didn't have any friends. So I called OM Cooking and the first person



who answered was Scotter. I got Bear and Peanut and Jimmer to take me back to Stillwater.

I decided to have my IUD taken out because I wanted to have a baby. I talked it over with Scotter and asked if he wanted to have the Father role. He said sure. Then I went home to New England and had the IUD taken out. I spent the weekend in New York with a friend named Chris and conceived. Scotter and I had real strong communication. He was even there when my child was conceived, though he was in Oklahoma and I was in New York. I called Scotter and asked if he was into the Father role and he said he was.

I was fairly sure I was pregnant when I went down to the Florida Gathering at Christmas with my girlfriend Jackie. I went to Miami for my pregnancy test and they said it was negative, but I knew I was pregnant. Jackie and I got very close at the gathering. It was good to have some good sister energy because I hadn't had that in a long time.

I was in charge of the kitchen at the gathering. One of my pet peeves about the gathering is the lack of cleanliness. I knew some of those people aren't used to keeping clean, but I couldn't put up with it. Neither could Jackie, which is why we left. One brother had infections on his feet which were turning into staph. Jackie and I decided to soak his feet in salts and clean up his wounds. You know what a chore it was to find firewood and boil water there. I got his feet soaked, then I was going to get scissors and cut bandages. I told him, "Stay there and don't walk in the dirt and get infected again," and the first thing that happened when I turned my back, he was walking around asking for a cigarette.

And I just said, "I don't really care," which is why I left. Jackie and I were the only women there at the time and the men were being like babies to a mama. I enjoyed the gathering in Florida. I've enjoyed every gathering I've gone to, but I never got the feeling again that I did out of the first gathering I went to in Arkansas. There were fewer people at the Arkansas Gathering and people could get closer to each other.

I went up to Scotter's place in North Carolina. We had a really good time and I really got along well with his family, which was a first for me. I never have gotten along with



boyfriends' families. I met Jenny Birchtree, Scotter's sister, who I really loved. Scotter and I went back to Sanibel Island, Florida and walked into a perfect situation - camping in a tent on the beach, a job making candles, a job cleaning condominiums.

We were going to Massachusetts to build a gypsy wagon on our truck with Corky. He had offered to help us. It turned out to be more of an elaborate project. Corky was a very handsome and masculine man. Scotter felt threatened by Corky, so he couldn't learn from him. Scotter exaggerated the attraction I felt for Corky. I've always been attracted to people who could have a thought in their mind, make a plan from it and carry it out.

I have very definite goals and when I met Scotter he didn't have any goals. I thought he had the same goals I did. I have dreams, visions of things. You get a flash in your mind, a picture, and you can see what you're gonna create. Like I get a flash - "I'm gonna have a garden" - and I started putting energy in that direction. If Scotter had been equal to Corky, Corky wouldn't have been a threat to him. I was attracted to Corky the way I am to most every other man. Scotter was seeing Corky through his fears.

It took so long to make the gypsy wagon, we never got to the Montana Gathering. I was real disappointed, but I guess it was not time for us to make it there.

Coming back to Glencoe, Oklahoma, to Barbara and Dave's farm was good for us. I really enjoyed having Buffalo Bob deliver the baby. Oro helped too. It was really an amazing experience. Scotter was divine. He helped me a lot. It was only a few weeks before Jesse was born that we decided to get married.

— Article by COYOTE "Sept 1, 1976: A Birth Story" —

I From the Wellspring Vol. 1 No. 5 "Everybody's New Age Newspaper" published in Coyle, Oklahoma as "Scotty" as printed here it changed to "Scotter".

Awakened early in the morning by Ananda and Under River telling me that Scotter just called, they think Sarah has started her labor the evening before. I hike over to the nearest phone, listen to the signs and agree; yes it's happening, time to get things together. I go home and milk the goats, feed the chickens, gather up my



three-year old son, have a hasty meditation and jump into the pickups.

Drive over to the DM Home to pick up Buffalo Bob who has caught a lot of babies, and he is out of town. A slight sinking sensation as I wonder if we will have any expert help at this birth after all. Knowing the presence of the Divine Spirit so strongly in this drama, my confidence surges back and the doubts go away.

Driving out to the Glencoe Farm, it is a beautiful morning. What a nice day for a birth. The vibes are very together at the farm, mellow and confident. Sarah is getting it on with her labor. We call Norman to see if anyone knows how to contact Opo, and in what seems to be a really cosmic accident, manage to get in touch. She has been studying midwifery and promises to jump right in her truck and head out. In another act of truly Divine Grace, Buffalo Bob calls Dave in town to see what's going on and all the connections get made. He is on his way too. I feel a wonderful sense of relief as all these energies move toward us.

Ananda and Dave show up bearing a beautiful birthday cake that Robin has made. (Sometime during the day I remember that it was my birthday too.) Evening comes on and everyone who is expected shows up for the birthday party.

Barbara fixes supper for everyone and soon it is time to do some serious birthing. We spent the whole night, Scotter, Ananda, Jenny Birchtree, Buffalo Bob, Opo, Barbara, Dave, Art, Becky, Daniel, Shiva Kumara, Greg and myself laboring with Sarah, pouring our energy for the birthing, praying, chanting, singing, making music to the baby, getting incredibly high on the energy of the experiences and at 2:18 a.m. to the cosmic hum of the DM being chanted, Jesse Cloud's head burst forth, bringing an unbelievable release of tension, joy, tears and laughter. What a moment! I never shall forget it. Words are quite inadequate. When we went out to greet the morning sun, it was akin to coming off an intense psychedelic experience...

### SARAH [Continued]

Babies usually like to be born at dawn. Jesse was. It was kind of a let-down. Everybody was there when the baby was born and then they were all gone leaving me and Scotter alone.



with this new baby that we didn't know. The first three months of a child - nothing could have prepared me for that kind of work. Like I didn't have time to brush my teeth. I was always either changing diapers or nursing. Coyote had said to me, "Nursing babies don't get colic," which is not true. The fourth day after Jesse was born, he didn't sleep. I thought I was going out of my mind. It was 95 degrees.

My year and a half with Jesse and Scotter has been one of the biggest changes in my life, from being a single free-moving person. Even when Scotter and I were pregnant, we could do what we liked. Now I still like to move, but with Jesse, when we move we have to move in style.

Scotter and I brought 200 pounds of food to the New Mexico Gathering in 1977. They were always talking about being in danger of running out of food, but Foxfire said people just had food paranoia. I did a lot of work at the Kiddle Center. Some people come to the gathering, they don't know heavy work is going on - shitters being dug, groceries being carried in. They just walk around and chant. But it's good having them around because their chanting keeps everyone else's spirits up.

We left the New Mexico Gathering four days early. Jesse got dysentery and was puking like a geyser every time I tried to nurse him. Two ladies had babies born at the gathering. One was born with a severed spine. He died after his parents left the gathering and they brought him back to the gathering place and buried him.

After the gathering we went to Silver City, New Mexico, and met this guy into Scientology named Rich. Rich loved us and wanted us to stay there and get our shit together and become clear, flowing individuals, but it was a matter of style. He had his own style and we weren't into it. We decided we were going to stay. Then we decided not to stay. Then we decided to stay again. But some people from the Rainbow Family showed up and I felt my home. I couldn't invite them to stay at Rich's place and feel comfortable about it. So we left Rich's.

We live in Coyle, Oklahoma. I think there's about 250 people here. I don't mind Coyle, but I'd rather live in the country than the



city. Coyle is town, it's close neighbors. We'll probably move as soon as we find a place in the country to move to. F!!

There's been a change in Scotty since he got a carpentry job here. He's not twinkle toes any more. He used to do just dishwashing and playing music. He was uncertain about his manhood. He needed this job because he needed the confidence he could get from doing what other men were doing. It was necessary for our relationship. Every time we used to talk about building a house or building the gypsy wagon onto our truck, I could feel him shrink up. Now with this job he has more confidence.

I'm not into trucking around after the Rainbow Family. I like to make bread. I like to garden. I'm not into just staying in one place all the time, but the people in the Rainbow caravan just are not very motivated. Like if they started gardening now in the spring, they could raise most of the food for the gathering. And if I was on a caravan and wanted to make some bread, I would have to run my own space, like a school bus.

I'd like to build a house in the shape of a keyhole. And at the rounded end I'd have bay windows with potted plants. And I'd design the house so we could shut it down and leave. Travel is great but it has its limitations. Staying in one place is great but it has its limitations too. Maybe a tipi is the answer. Live in the house in winter and travel with the tipi in warm weather. Living in a tipi rounds off the corners in your mind.

I'm fasting now. It's a preventative medicine. It's very difficult for me. I haven't done fasting in a long time. And nursing Jesse while I'm fasting is really a trip.

I may be pregnant again. It may be strange for me now, but I'll be glad for it later on. It'll be good for Jesse to have another child around. I won't be giving him too much attention. I have a sweet life. I like it.